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April 20, 1996
Marlette, Michigan 48453
To: U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Fissile Materials Disposition
P. O. Box 23786
Washington, D.C. 20026-3786

Prime Minister Christian
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6
CANADA

From: Ward J. Hodge
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Gentlemen: One Planet-- One Letter, One Problem:

This is about a political and an economic pendulum that has swung too far to one side. The big news story of 1996 will be that citizens on the North American continent will share many of the same economic, social, and environmental concerns for the future.

As an economist, I find little to cheer about from either our state or our nation's capitol today. Far right ideologies are replacing rational thought. Unprecedented firestorms of anti-regulatory legislation have turned traditional economic theories upside-down. Established regulatory lines between government agencies and our corporations are being rapidly erased.

Subversive agendas are promoting the privatization of public facilities and glorifying competition in our public utilities. Where is the concern on the part of our government officials for the future sustainability of the human race? Please respond to this letter with your plans to address the new wave of citizen anti-nuclear sentiment on your horizon. You are in a unique position to help stop the continued proliferation of nuclear waste on this planet.

I have recently received a draft copy of a news release regarding the sale of USA surplus Plutonium to Canada. From one viewpoint, it is immaterial what this will be used for. The news release, from the Nuclear Awareness Project in Uxbridge, Ontario tells about the possible production of mixed oxide (MOX) fuel for use in two of the Bruce "A" nuclear reactors. "A proposal put forward by Ontario Hydro and Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) through AECL's U.S. Subsidiary, AECL Technologies."

This AECL Technologies proposal is, "based on the assumption that (the) Bruce reactors will be retubed 'because there is a demand for electricity'". I believe this is a faulty assumption fueled by corporate agenda needs to continue a government supported planet-wide nuclear power base that is not sustainable.

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If I read the reports correctly, this exchange of considerable Canadian money for surplus U.S. Plutonium will mean trucking monthly shipments of approximately 2 metric tons per year to Canada for 25 years. No where do I read that there is a guarantee that this is a safe way to dispose of 50 metric tons of nuclear poison.

The trucks moving this waste will travel within a short distance of where I am presently living-- across the Blue Water bridge at Port Huron into Sarnia Canada. To me, this seems an outrageous crapshoot and a waste of Canadian financial resources.

According to the Nuclear Awareness Project (NAP) draft, The AECI Technologies proposal boasts that a Provisional Environmental Assessment could likely be avoided by treating the MOX fuel "Missions" as being exempt under the Environmental assessment exemption granted to Bruce "A" reactors in 1976.

(Haven't we learned anything in the past twenty years?) Also according to the NAP draft, "The original plutonium is not actually eliminated and additional plutonium is created within the fuel bundles in the process."

As this is being written, USA President Clinton is involved with other world leaders and Russia's Yeltsin to agree on a nuclear test ban sometime in the future. In today's news, Our President uses superlatives to describe what this will mean in our future.

April 1, this year, Canada's GLOBE AND MAIL reported that, "Senior government sources confirmed that Prime Minister Chretien supports (this) MOX fuel proposal, including importing Russian MOX fuel for use at the Bruce reactors." Chretien is apparently planning to endorse the whole scheme at the April 19-20 1996 Nuclear Safety & Security Summit of world leaders in Moscow."

Sir, It is no secret that we must do things differently in the next century if we want a sustainable future. First nation Americans continue to look ahead seven generations, while most of the ancestors of European emigrants in North America consider themselves lucky if they can look ahead to their next pay check, or their next election. Is that the kind of progress that we want here?

Albert Einstein is quoted in Chapter three of a new book about W. Edwards Deming, "THINKING ABOUT QUALITY -- Progress, Wisdom, and the Deming Philosophy."

"The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them"

Before any further action is taken on either side of our mutual border, all government and corporate officials involved should consider the implications of the following:

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1) In a January 1994 WAR AND PEACE DIGEST article headlined, "Physicist Chernousenko speaks on Horrors of Chernobyl", We read that a "Cover-up (was) lifted during U.S. Speaking Tour."

"Vladimir Chernousenko, the heroic Ukrainian Nuclear physicist who supervised the "clean up" of Chernobyl, reveals the true magnitude of the disaster. Like a voice crying in the wilderness, he is now committed to alerting the world of the fatal dangers of nuclear power. This may be his final effort. A victim of radiation poisoning resulting from the Chernobyl accident, Chernousenko is now dying of cancer."

2) Harvey Wasserman, senior adviser for Greenpeace, has written a message in the latest Mother Jones magazine headlined, "Slaying The Nuclear Dragon." According to Wasserman, "A combination of strong activism, and bad economics has halted the building of nuclear reactors in the U.S. and Europe... Asia is a different story." (Is development so dear and life so cheap in China and India that nuclear power is the only option there?)

3) In the January/February, 1996 WORLD WATCH Magazine Christopher Flavin has written about the next Energy Revolution entitled, "POWER SHOCK". He says that we may soon witness the most dramatic changes in a world energy economy in a hundred years. He writes that, "Once technological change gathers momentum, it can move at Lightning speed." He includes solar electrical power and fuel cells in his analysis. "In a new joint venture called EnergyWorks, Bechtel Enterprises, Inc., and PacificCorp, a giant utility... will pursue projects around the world based on wind turbines, biomass, industrial energy efficiency, and other technologies that most large energy firms have spurned as puny..."

Sir, I speak against any further development of nuclear power, both in this hemisphere and anywhere else on this planet until we have solved the problem of disposing this life-threatening waste, some of which can be with us for at least a quarter of a million years. That, in itself, is too long to even comprehend in a rational manner considering the frailty of life here, and the speed at which we are presently destroying our natural resources and our eco-systems.

On this continent we are neglecting our future because we are in denial about our present, and have forgotten much of our past. On both sides of our border, government officials working with multinational lobbyists, must stop measuring human progress in terms of dollars gained and natural resources destroyed. If Canada is doing this, as suggested, to help nuclear disarmament efforts of the USA and Russia, I believe it to be folly of the worst sort that will not reflect well on this administration or your department.

Sincerely,



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The Department of Energy acknowledges the commentator's opposition to the Reactor Alternatives. However, NEPA requires that DOE look at all reasonable alternatives and, therefore, reactor burning must be considered. Decisions on the disposition of weapons-usable fissile materials will be based upon environmental analyses, technical and economic studies, national policy considerations, and public input.